

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 10, 2017

Mr. Filippo Grandi
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Case Postale 2500
CH-1211 Geneve 2 Depot
Switzerland

Dear High Commissioner Grandi,

On January 12, 2017, President Obama terminated the special parole program for Cuban refugees. Many Cubans began their journey prior to the Executive Order, but upon reaching the U.S./Mexican border, they were surprised to discover that they missed the January 12 deadline. As a result, several thousand Cuban nationals are now stranded outside the United States and facing an uncertain future.

Although Cubanos Sin Fronteras reports that 97% of these stranded Cubans have family in the United States, they cannot avail themselves of the United States' Cuban Family Reunification Parole Program while they are in a third country.

The U.S. Embassy conducts monitoring interviews by telephone throughout Cuba and in person in Havana. We have heard some reports of refugees being threatened by Cuban government officials upon return. Many of these Cubans fear repatriation due to the grave reprisals that many in Cuba face when forcibly returned to the often vengeful Castro dictatorship. The Cuban people are desperate to escape the brutal and escalating oppression that led them to make this perilous journey.

Accordingly, within all applicable international laws, we ask that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees work to ensure that international norms and customs, including those stated in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, are respected with regard to the situation of Cubans nationals who were en-route to the United States prior to the January 12, 2017 Executive Order. We ask that you ensure that these individuals and families are afforded access to basic necessities such as food, water, and basic medical care, and that they are provided the opportunity to fully present any asylum claims.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this request.

Cordially,



Carlos Curbelo



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen



Mario Diaz-Balart



Albio Sires